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INDIANA HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS

BY OSCAR H. WILLIAMS, Critic Teacher, Bloomington.

Thanks to the energy and foresight of a small but enthusiastic group of workers in Indiana History, the documentary material for this field is fast becoming accessible to students and writers. For two years, the Indiana Historical Survey, under the direction of the State University, has diligently collected and catalogued files of early Indiana newspapers, together with pamphlets and other documents (some in manuscript form) bearing upon the history of the State. In similar fashion, the State Archives Commission, with headquarters in the Indiana State Library, has gathered from all parts of the State newspaper collections and other documentary material of inestimable value to the historian.

Fortunate, indeed, for the project of that comprehensive history of the State which is yet to be written, that these enterprises were put under way. For much of this material, from neglect and misuse, was speedily passing beyond the reach of human hands. Anyone who has delved into the uncatalogued records of a community's history knows how relentlessly they are destroyed by the ravages of time. As a people we of the State of Indiana, are notoriously prone to neglect the preservation of such records. Indeed, we have not hitherto learned to cherish our traditions or to place high store upon the past. Almost until the present generation, the Hoosier stock have been too deeply engrossed with their material tasks to have either the leisure or the inclination to dwell upon the achievements of previous generations of Indiana people. In the early days, the titanic labor involved in draining the swamps, transforming the forests into arable fields, constructing bridges and highways, quite absorbed the restless energies of our people. Later the work of building the gigantic forges and factories of industry has kept our minds in tense concentration upon present problems. But as we near the century mark, we are rapidly passing from a purely agricultural order to one that is largely industrial. Wealth is accumulating and with it have come that leisure and scholarly activity which are essential to a full appreciation of the record of achievement of former days.

And it is a record of which the native stock may well be proud. Admirers have long been accustomed to sing the praises of Indiana's line of literary workers. No less a source of pride and satisfaction

to the native Hoosier is the long and illustrious array of warriors, statesmen, jurists, artists, and builders in education, who have brought renown to the State since its foundation. The results attained from early days in programs of social regeneration, in constructive statesmanship, in educational experiment and pioneering, have been such as to induce older States to study and copy.

We are at last awakening to a sense of values in the study of the history of the State. Although but three generations removed from the original pioneer stock, we derive our knowledge of its characteristics almost wholly from family tradition. Anything like a connected and philosophical view of the development of the commonwealth, a survey such as will reveal the stages of an evolving social order, is wholly wanting. As for our children, their experiences, their instruction, and their daily tasks are remote from the struggles and contests of the early days of the fathers. Year in and year out, the youth of the State are diligently instructed in the history of the nation, and properly so, but they are left in almost total ignorance of the rich current of State history which is sweeping past them. All the phases of social and industrial transformation, of political and religious change, which appear in the nation's history, may in the history of the State be seen in nearer perspective, in clearer outline, and with more vivid reality. Indiana, as the nation, has passed through the principal stages of social and industrial development. Here are seen the successive frontiers of the Indian trader, the ranchman, the farmer, and at last the manufacturer comes to add the capstone of material comfort. On the political side, Indiana has had her colonial period; her epoch of constitution-making; her time of internal growth, wherein questions of public improvements, of banking, public lands, and Indian affairs, were uppermost; she has had her struggle for and against slavery; her part in the Civil War was most noteworthy. In stately pageantry, all the great movements of the nation's life pass across the page of the State's history.

To bring youthful minds into lasting touch with the historical drama of the past of their State, there has wisely been planned a systematic course in Indiana History for the schools. This has been incorporated in the State course of study, not as a new and separate study, but one to be closely linked with American History. The course is designed to continue through the grades and the high school.

For the teacher the problem is one of supply. "Where can I find material for teaching Indiana History?" is the query which in-

voluntarily arises. A well-constructed textbooks in State history, adapted to children of the grammar grades, is lacking. An authentic and scientific history of Indiana, covering the period of statehood, is yet to be written. Two or three books of children's stories, such as the charmingly written *Stories of Indiana*, by Maurice Thompson, and the literary product of Mrs. Levering, entitled *Historic Indiana*, constitute the sum total of available material for teaching purposes. It was with a view of placing in the hands of teachers and pupils a book of readable and first hand selections which may serve to bring out strongly the salient facts in the history of the State, that a committee recently chosen by the State History Teachers' Section, has undertaken to compile such a book.

The title of the book, which bears the imprint of Indiana University, is *Readings in Indiana History*. Four well-marked periods of State history appear in the grouping of the selections. First comes the period, extending from 1765 to 1816, in which Indiana was still an Indian country. The readings here chosen bring out the facts of Indian occupation, of French trading posts, of the conquest for Virginia by Captain Clark, of the increased tension in the relations of Indians and white settlers, and of the final outburst of war which culminated in the destruction of the Indian power. Next, the period from 1816 to about 1836 is called "Pioneer Indiana." In it the selections are such as to bring out the aspects of pioneer life and the conquest of the wilderness. Then a third period, covering the years from 1836 to 1844, is shown to be one of internal growth. Questions of internal improvement, of banking, and of political organization hold sway and are illustrated by a series of carefully selected readings. Finally the fourth period, from about 1844 to the years following the Civil War is known as "Overshadowing National Questions." Here the readings show the slavery struggle in the State, its part in the great Civil War, and the treatment of the negro in Indiana before and after freedom was attained.

Something near one hundred and fifty selections, extracts from letters, journals, narratives, newspaper accounts, written by participants and eye-witnesses, compose the matter of the book. The selections were chosen primarily for their inherent interest for children as well as for their type characteristics. The style is in every case attractive and vigorous. The language of the selections is that rare combination of literary English and practical colloquialism for which the Hoosier is justly famed. The selections are grouped and woven into a connected whole by means of introductory notes and comments written by the editorial committee. A well-

written historical introduction to the book, and other introductions to the periods, serve well to give the historic setting and background. A detailed outline for lesson assignments aids in making the book serviceable.

Innumerable ways to use the book will suggest themselves to the skillful teacher. Here is fresh material for daily reading and for composition lessons. The travel and hunting tales, new and interesting, full of local life and color, suggest a practicable basis for oral composition. And the geography lesson, in so far as it may touch upon the State, finds abundant illustrative matter in the accounts of early travellers. But it is as a source for the history lesson that we are chiefly concerned. Occasionally the selections, such as those bearing upon the slavery controversy, will furnish valuable sidelights upon the lessons in American History. However, in the grammar grades, a definite period, on designated days, should be allotted to the study of Indiana history. Time may be found for this work by giving relatively less emphasis to certain less valuable portions of American History. The problems which confronted the early settlers in Indiana, the surmounting of physical obstacles in the conquest of the forest, the dangers encountered in dealing with a savage foe, all furnish stimulating exercises for the constructive abilities of children. Let the boys and girls settle the question, in given situations, of how and why a certain course should be pursued. Have them discover the advantages of canals over turnpikes and of railroads over canals. Let the children find out why the people in certain parts of the State were strongly pro-slavery and why those in other parts were equally opposed to slavery.

In Indiana history we have a subject close to the interests of children. They will enter with enthusiasm into the stories of settlement and of Indian captures. Often they will enrich the material at hand by bringing in their own family traditions of similar adventures. The subjects should always be made concrete and tangible. Encourage the making of models by the children. Most boys can readily be interested in the work of constructing a Conestoga wagon or a "river ark." For small children, pictures and sketches are essential. Crude drawings often serve the purpose of elaborating the construction of an Indian canoe or a settler's cabin. A map should often be made to show a wilderness trail, the State system of canals, the first railway, or the three Indiana capitals. A story should never be left until its exact locality is fixed and described. In this way the boys and girls will come to know their State quite as intimately as they know their local community.

It is believed that a substantial contribution to the better understanding of the State's history and her part in the national development has been made by the preparation of this book. A somewhat pretentious volume it is, of about 500 pages of matter. But through the generosity of the State University, in keeping with its ideal of public service, the book has been placed upon the market at a nominal price, intended merely to cover the cost of publication. The book may be ordered direct from the University Bookstore.